

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for filling foods into sausage skins, comprising the steps of:

pushing a ~~for which the~~ sausage skin ~~(22) is pushed~~ in the form of an endless tube onto a filler pipe ~~(20)~~,

extruding a ~~the food is extruded~~ as a strand ~~(26)~~ through the filler pipe ~~(20)~~ into the sausage skin, ~~(22) and~~

severing the filled sausage skin ~~is severed~~ at intervals, ~~and closed~~

closing off at the ends of the severed and filled sausage skins, to produce ~~so that~~ sausage-like end products, and ~~(10) result, characterized in that the~~

pre-cutting the strand ~~(26) is severed~~ at the places at least one place in the filler pipe ~~(20)~~, at which later on the filled sausage skin ~~(22)~~ is severed.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~

further comprising the step of pressing the strand ~~(26)~~ ~~is pressed~~ in cyclical fashion through the filler pipe, ~~(20)~~ and wherein the steps of severing of the sausage skin ~~(22)~~

and ~~the~~ pre-cutting of the strand (26) take place approximately simultaneously in ~~the~~ phases, during in which the pressing process step is interrupted.

3. (Currently Amended) A device for filling foods into sausage skins, comprising: with

a filling press (12) for extruding ~~the~~ food in the form of a strand (26) through a filler pipe (20), which is surrounded by a sausage skin (22), which is closed off at one end, and

~~with~~ a severing and sealing device (14) for ~~the~~ cyclical severing of the sausage skin (22), filled with the strand (26), and for sealing ~~the~~ ends of the sausage skin, and ~~characterized in that~~

a pre-cutting device (30) for pre-cutting the strand (26), contained in the filler pipe, the pre-cutting device is disposed at the filler pipe (20) upstream from the sausage skin (22).

4. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the pre-cutting device (30) is disposed in such an axial position at the filler pipe (20), that ~~the~~ a volume of the strand (26) between the closed end of the sausage skin and the pre-cutting device (30) is ~~the~~ an n-fold volume of an end product (10), which is formed between two consecutive operating

cycles of the severing and sealing device ~~(14)~~, n being a whole number equal to or larger than 1.